

Remarks

The Office Action dated March 9, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and the following amendments and comments are made in response thereto. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Applicants respectfully submit that no new prohibited matter has been introduced by the claim amendments. Written description support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification and original claims.

Summary of Final Office Action

1. The Examiner contends that Applicants have not complied with one or more conditions for receiving the benefit of an earlier filing date under 35 U.S.C. 102.
2. Claims 49, 54 to 61 and 66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Shattuck-Eidens *et al.* (WO 96/05306).
3. Claims 50 to 53 and 62 to 65 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to non-compliance for receiving benefit of an earlier filing date

Without acquiescing to the merits of the rejection, Applicants have amended the claims such that they all incorporate a feature directed to SEQ ID NO: 3. As the Examiner has indicated that SEQ ID NO: 3 is present in the priority application (see Office Action at page 2), Applicants submit that the amended claims are entitled to the benefit of the earliest claimed priority date under 35 U.S.C. 120 (U.S. Application 08/598,591 filed on February 12, 1996).

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

The Office Action rejected claims 49, 54 to 61 and 66 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Shattuck-Eidens *et al.* (WO 96/05306). Without acquiescing to the merits of the rejection, Applicants have either cancelled these claims or amended the claims such that they incorporate the features of dependent claims 50 to 53 or 62 to 65 (*i.e.*, SEQ ID NO: 3), which the Examiner has indicated as allowable (see Office Action at page 4). In view of the amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited reference is no longer applicable and the rejection is moot.

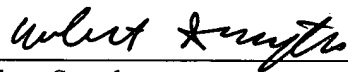
Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the subject application in view of the amendments to the claims and the above remarks. It is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this amendment, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Dated: **June 4, 2004**
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Respectfully submitted
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